



WORKING WITH YOUNG  
CHILDREN WITH TRAUMA -  
APPLYING PRACTICE  
PRINCIPLE 8 REFLECTIVE  
PRACTICE

## Case study

### COLLECT INFORMATION

Think deeply about all aspects of practice

The educators working in an education and care setting were concerned about several newly enrolled babies and toddlers whose families had arrived recently as refugees from Somalia. The parents and the children were finding separation difficult. The children were not enjoying meal times and did not settle at rest times. The strategies that the educators had used previously to provide support for children and families in transition periods did not seem to be working well.

### QUESTION/ANALYSE

Use critical questions to challenge assumptions and analyse current practice  
Learn about yourself and how you work with children and families

At a staff meeting the Coordinator asked questions to help the educators reflect more deeply about their concerns for the children and families and what they could do to support them:

- Why are the strategies we have previously used to help children and families settle and feel safe and welcome in the centre not working?
- What do we know about Somali culture and child rearing practices?
- What do we know about these particular children?
- What might we need to think about?
- What could we do differently?
- Who or what could help us?

Through reflecting on, researching and debating these questions, the educators recognised that, although there were families and children from diverse cultural backgrounds in the setting, most of the educators had not worked with recently arrived refugee children and families.

Some educators thought that it was *just a matter of time* and the children and families would *settle in due course*.

The discussion also revealed that there were some misunderstandings about which country in Africa these families came from and their experiences as refugees.

One educator suggested, *Maybe our previous transition strategies work well for some families and children, but they are not working here and we can't just hope time will make it better.*

### PLAN

Further discussion helped the educators to understand the implications of the fact that these were families whose experiences differed from those of other families in the centre, including migrant families.

### ACT/DO

Take action as a result of deep thinking and critical questioning

The educators decided that they needed to act and not wait, as the childrens and families' wellbeing was a priority for them. They planned immediate and longer-term actions including:

- rearranging the morning roster so that there was an













## discussion starter

You have started at a new service that needs to develop a service philosophy to underpin its policies and practices.

1. How will you initiate this process?

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2. Who will be involved? Why?

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3. Who can help with this process?

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4. How can the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework support the development of your philosophy?

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5. What theories about child development, learning and curriculum will underpin your philosophy?

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## Notes

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## DISCUSSION STARTER

Think about the statements in the table and identify the practices in your setting that support or match them.

Identify further practices you could implement to reflect these statements.

Statement

Children are capable, interested learners from birth.

Practice

Statement

Families are the most important people in children's lives.

Practice





## Case study

*You can start with any topic so long as you take it deeper. For example, we have recently reflected on the use of dummies at rest time and why children might be distressed at not having them. Last year we even did some reflective practice about the staff dress code as a result of a staff member wearing a singlet to work. (Educational leader in an education and care setting)*

1. What do the educator's comments in the above example about *taking it deeper* mean?

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2. Why is it a good idea to reflect more deeply? What are the risks if you don't think deeply about all aspects of your practice?

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## Notes

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## USES FOR REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

teaching AND LEARNING PURPOSE	REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS OR THINGS TO WONDER ABOUT
Help children to connect current learning with past experiences or learning (transfer of learning from one context to another)	<i>Do you remember when we...?</i> <i>What do you remember about...?</i> <i>What do you know about...?</i>
Help children to build on existing skills or knowledge	<i>What other ways could you...?</i> <i>What do you want to know more about?</i> <i>I'm wondering how you...?</i>
Support children to reflect on what they already know and can do	<i>What do you know about...?</i> <i>How do you know that?</i> <i>Who helped you to learn...?</i>
Help children think about where they can find more information about things that interest them and who could help them to find that information	<i>How can we find out more?</i> <i>Where would we find that information?</i> <i>Who could help us to find...?</i>
Promote further exploration, investigation and hypothesising	<i>What else might work?</i> <i>How could we fix this problem?</i> <i>What would happen if...?</i>
Show that you value children's many ways of expressing their learning (what they know and can do)	<i>What other ways could we...?</i> <i>How interesting that you...</i> <i>I've never thought about doing it that way...</i>
Encourage learning from and with others (collaborative learning)	<i>How could we learn from...?</i> <i>Why is it better to work with someone else to...?</i>

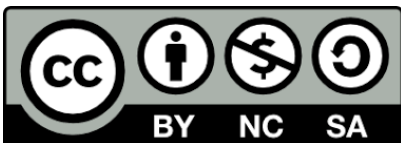












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